

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An ~~automated~~ computer-implemented method for aiding new product introduction, said method comprising:

inputting, to a computer, merchant's data relating to a proposed new product,

wherein said merchant's data comprises product attributes and positioning attributes of said proposed new product, product attribute value ranges and positioning attribute value ranges of interest to said merchant, and a business objective, said business objective further comprising maximization of any of revenue, profit, and unit sales;

obtaining, from competitors' websites, competitors' data relating to competitors' products similar to said proposed new product,

wherein said competitor's data comprises product attribute name-value pairs, positioning attribute name-value pairs, and pricing associated with each of said competitors' products, said pricing further comprising any of list price, discounts, and credit terms;

processing, by said computer, said competitors' data,

wherein said processing comprises filtering said competitors' data according to merchant selected value ranges for said product and positioning attributes;

identifying, by said computer, a shortlist of product attributes and positioning attributes based on the filtered competitors' data,

wherein each of said competitors' products is mapped to said shortlist of product attributes and positioning attributes,

wherein holes are identified in a map of said short list of product attributes, where no said competitors' products exist,

wherein each of said holes is classified as attractive or unattractive, and

wherein clusters of said competitors' products with similar product attributes from said shortlist are formed, said forming of clusters being based on values of said product and positioning attributes from said shortlist, and using a distance metric that factors in said business objective; and

conducting, by said computer, conjoint data analysis on said clusters to identify said product and positioning attributes from said shortlist associated with a product's success,

wherein said conjoint data analysis on said clusters is incomplete due to inadequate competitors' data;

conducting online market research to obtain further competitors' data sufficient to completely analyze said clusters by conjoint data analysis; and

outputting, by said computer, at least one marketing mix for said proposed new product based on a result of said online market research and completed conjoint data analysis, said at least one marketing mix comprising any of a product configuration, a product position, and a price for said proposed new product.

2-6. (Canceled).

7. (Currently Amended) An ~~automated~~ computer-implemented method for identifying a need for reconfiguring, repositioning and/or repricing a product, said method comprising:

inputting, to a computer, merchant's data relating to one or more of a merchant's existing products,

wherein said merchant's data comprises product attributes and positioning attributes of each of said existing products, product attribute value ranges and positioning attribute value ranges of interest to said merchant, and pricing;

periodically obtaining competitors' data, from competitors' websites, relating to said competitors' products that are similar to said one or more of said merchant's existing products,

wherein said competitor's data comprises product attribute name-value pairs, positioning attribute name-value pairs, and pricing associated with each of said competitors' products, said pricing further comprising any of list price, discounts, and credit terms;

processing, by said computer, said competitors' data,

wherein said processing comprises filtering said competitors' data according to merchant selected value ranges for said product and positioning attributes;

identifying, by said computer, a shortlist of product attributes and positioning attributes based on the filtered competitors' data,

wherein each of said competitors' products is mapped to said shortlist of product attributes and positioning attributes,

wherein holes are identified in a map of said short list of product attributes, where no said competitors' products exist,

wherein each of said holes is classified as attractive or unattractive, and

wherein clusters of said competitors' products with similar product attributes from said shortlist are formed, said forming of clusters being based on values of said product and positioning attributes from said shortlist, and using a distance metric that factors in said business objective; and

detecting a change in the product and positioning attributes from said shortlist relating to at least one competitors' product that is similar to said one or more of said merchant's existing products;

conducting, by said computer, conjoint data analysis on said clusters to identify said product and positioning attributes from said shortlist associated with a product's success,

wherein said conjoint data analysis on said clusters is incomplete due to inadequate competitors' data;

conducting online market research to obtain further competitors' data sufficient to completely analyze said clusters by conjoint data analysis; and

outputting, by said computer, said one or more of said merchant's existing products that require repositioning and/or repricing based on the detected change, a result of said online market research, and completed conjoint data analysis.

8-13. (Canceled).

14. (Currently Amended) A computer program storage ~~device~~ readable by ~~machine~~ a computer, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by said ~~machine~~ computer to perform an automated method for aiding new product introduction, said method comprising:

inputting merchant's data relating to a proposed new product,

wherein said merchant's data comprises product attributes and positioning attributes of said proposed new product, product attribute value ranges and positioning attribute

value ranges of interest to said merchant, and a business objective, said business objective further comprising maximization of any of revenue, profit, and unit sales;

obtaining, from competitors' websites, competitors' data relating to competitors' products similar to said proposed new product,

wherein said competitor's data comprises product attribute name-value pairs, positioning attribute name-value pairs, and pricing associated with each of said competitors' products, said pricing further comprising any of list price, discounts, and credit terms;

processing said competitors' data,

wherein said processing comprises filtering said competitors' data according to merchant selected value ranges for said product and positioning attributes;

identifying a shortlist of product attributes and positioning attributes based on the filtered competitors' data,

wherein each of said competitors' products is mapped to said shortlist of product attributes and positioning attributes,

wherein holes are identified in a map of said short list of product attributes, where no said competitors' products exist,

wherein each of said holes is classified as attractive or unattractive, and

wherein clusters of said competitors' products with similar product attributes from said shortlist are formed, said forming of clusters being based on values of said product and positioning attributes from said shortlist, and using a distance metric that factors in said business objective; and

conducting conjoint data analysis on said clusters to identify said product and positioning attributes from said shortlist associated with a product's success,

wherein said conjoint data analysis on said clusters is incomplete due to inadequate competitors' data;

conducting online market research to obtain further competitors' data sufficient to completely analyze said clusters by conjoint data analysis; and

outputting at least one marketing mix for said proposed new product based on a result of said online market research and completed conjoint data analysis, said at least one marketing mix

comprising any of a product configuration, a product position, and a price for said proposed new product.

15-19. (Canceled).

20. (Currently Amended) A computer program storage device readable by ~~machine~~ a computer, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by said ~~machine~~ computer to perform an automated method for identifying a need for reconfiguring, repositioning and/or repricing a product, said method comprising:

inputting merchant's data relating to one or more of a merchant's existing products, wherein said merchant's data comprises product attributes and positioning attributes of each of said existing products, product attribute value ranges and positioning attribute value ranges of interest to said merchant, and pricing;

periodically obtaining competitors' data, from competitors' websites, relating to said competitors' products that are similar to said one or more of said merchant's existing products, wherein said competitor's data comprises product attribute name-value pairs, positioning attribute name-value pairs, and pricing associated with each of said competitors' products, said pricing further comprising any of list price, discounts, and credit terms;

processing said competitors' data, wherein said processing comprises filtering said competitors' data according to merchant selected value ranges for said product and positioning attributes;

identifying a shortlist of product attributes and positioning attributes based on the filtered competitors' data,

wherein each of said competitors' products is mapped to said shortlist of product attributes and positioning attributes,

wherein holes are identified in a map of said short list of product attributes, where no said competitors' products exist,

wherein each of said holes is classified as attractive or unattractive, and

wherein clusters of said competitors' products with similar product attributes from said shortlist are formed, said forming of clusters being based on values of said product and

positioning attributes from said shortlist, and using a distance metric that factors in said business objective; and

detecting a change in the product and positioning attributes from said shortlist relating to at least one competitors' product that is similar to said one or more of said merchant's existing products;

conducting conjoint data analysis on said clusters to identify said product and positioning attributes from said shortlist associated with a product's success,

wherein said conjoint data analysis on said clusters is incomplete due to inadequate competitors' data;

conducting online market research to obtain further competitors' data sufficient to completely analyze said clusters by conjoint data analysis; and

outputting said one or more of said merchant's existing products that require repositioning and/or repricing based on the detected change, a result of said online market research, and completed conjoint data analysis.

21-26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) A system for aiding new product introduction, comprising:

a memory that stores an inputted merchant's data relating to a proposed new product,

wherein said merchant's data comprises product attributes and positioning attributes of said proposed new product, product attribute value ranges and positioning attribute value ranges of interest to said merchant, and a business objective, said business objective further comprising maximization of any of revenue, profit, and unit sales; and

a processor configured to:

obtain, from competitors' websites, competitors' data relating to competitors' products similar to said proposed new product,

wherein said competitor's data comprises product attribute name-value pairs, positioning attribute name-value pairs, and pricing associated with each of said competitors' products, said pricing further comprising any of list price, discounts, and credit terms;

process said competitors' data,

wherein said processing comprises filtering said competitors' data according to merchant selected value ranges for said product and positioning attributes;

identify a shortlist of product attributes and positioning attributes based on the filtered competitors' data,

wherein each of said competitors' products is mapped to said shortlist of product attributes and positioning attributes,

wherein holes are identified in a map of said short list of product attributes, where no said competitors' products exist,

wherein each of said holes is classified as attractive or unattractive, and

wherein clusters of said competitors' products with similar product attributes from said shortlist are formed, said forming of clusters being based on values of said product and positioning attributes from said shortlist, and using a distance metric that factors in said business objective; and

conduct conjoint data analysis on said clusters to identify said product and positioning attributes from said shortlist associated with a product's success,

wherein said conjoint data analysis on said clusters is incomplete due to inadequate competitors' data;

conduct online market research to obtain further competitors' data sufficient to completely analyze said clusters by conjoint data analysis; and

output at least one marketing mix for said proposed new product based on a result of said online market research and completed conjoint data analysis, said at least one marketing mix comprising any of a product configuration, a product position, and a price for said proposed new product.

28-30. (Canceled).

31. (Previously Presented) A system for identifying a need for reconfiguring, repositioning and/or repricing a product, comprising:

a memory that stores an inputted merchant's data relating to one or more of a merchant's existing products,

wherein said merchant's data comprises product attributes and positioning attributes of each of said existing products, product attribute value ranges and positioning attribute value ranges of interest to said merchant, and pricing; and

a processor configured to:

periodically obtain competitors' data, from competitors' websites, relating to said competitors' products that are similar to said one or more of said merchant's existing products,

wherein said competitor's data comprises product attribute name-value pairs, positioning attribute name-value pairs, and pricing associated with each of said competitors' products, said pricing further comprising any of list price, discounts, and credit terms;

process said competitors' data,

wherein said processing comprises filtering said competitors' data according to merchant selected value ranges for said product and positioning attributes;

identify a shortlist of product attributes and positioning attributes based on the filtered competitors' data,

wherein each of said competitors' products is mapped to said shortlist of product attributes and positioning attributes,

wherein holes are identified in a map of said short list of product attributes, where no said competitors' products exist,

wherein each of said holes is classified as attractive or unattractive, and

wherein clusters of said competitors' products with similar product attributes from said shortlist are formed, said forming of clusters being based on values of said product and positioning attributes from said shortlist, and using a distance metric that factors in said business objective; and

detect a change in the product and positioning attributes from said shortlist relating to at least one competitors' product that is similar to said one or more of said merchant's existing products;

conduct conjoint data analysis on said clusters to identify said product and positioning attributes from said shortlist associated with a product's success,

wherein said conjoint data analysis on said clusters is incomplete due to inadequate competitors' data;

conduct online market research to obtain further competitors' data sufficient to completely analyze said clusters by conjoint data analysis; and

output said one or more of said merchant's existing products that require repositioning and/or repricing based on the detected change, a result of said online market research, and completed conjoint data analysis.

32-35. (Canceled).